



STATE OF VERMONT  
Department of Education  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Capitol Plaza Conference Center, Montpelier Room, 100 State Street, Montpelier**  
**January 15, 2008**

*The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.*

**Approved Minutes - January 15, 2008**

**Present: Board Members: Tom James, Chair; Ruth Stokes, Vice-chair; Brian Vachon; Fayneese Miller; Jessica Bullock; Tess Savage; Chris Robbins; Bill Corrow; Susan Schill**

**DOE: Commissioner Richard Cate; William Talbott; Carol King; Mark Oettinger; Kerry Garber; Tina Muncy; Maureen Start; Cathy Hilgendorf; Tina Muncy; Carol Duley; David White; Kay Charron; Bill Romond**

**Others: Wendy Houlihan, Windham Central SU; Bob Stevens, VPA; Sherry Gile, VT-NEA; Steve Kimbell, KSE; Carlene Riccelli, The College Board; Kevin Stine, Dorset; Charles Parmalee, ACT; Jim White, ACT; Dwight Davis, VISA; Angelo Dorta, VT-NEA; Steve Perkins, Winooski HS; Jen Helm, Winooski HS; Cathy Mander-Adams, Winooski HS; Retta Dunlap, VBE**

---

**Legislative Breakfast**

State Board members hosted a breakfast for members of the House and Senate Education Committees and others prior to the Board's monthly meeting. The discussion focused on the Future of Education initiative.

---

**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Tom James, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:51 a.m. He led the Pledge of Allegiance.

---

**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Chair James and Board members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

---

**Item C: Public to be Heard**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

**Item D: Announcements; Board Member Updates**

Tom James shared a thank you card from Sally Bouffard, who recently retired as private secretary to numerous commissioners of education.

Tom James also shared that he had spoken with Dawn Francis, mother of former student Board member Matt Francis and learned that Matt did not go to Maryland as planned, but instead worked to earn \$5,000 and participated in a program called “Travel to Teach” - where he taught English to young people and monks in Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. He is now back and applying to Middlebury College. Carol King shared that former student Board member Trevor Braun is now in his last semester at Northeastern University.

---

**Item E: December Monthly Report**

Chair James informed the group that the monthly report has been coming out since August 2005 and that it is intended to be a tool for communication. It is also on the web at: <http://education.vermont.gov/html/board/schedule.html> . Chair James encouraged all to look at the monthly report via the Web site and to stay abreast of what is happening with the Board.

---

**Discussion Items**

**Item J: FY 09 Budget** (Richard Cate, Bill Talbott)

**Document (s):** Green Sheet and FY 2009 budget book summary pages

**Discussion:**

Bill Talbott provided detail on the information sent to the Board. Budgets are leaner and the final target numbers were not received until just before the holidays. The summary pages provided come from the current draft of the Board’s budget book.

There is a target of six department positions that must be eliminated, resulting in a net general fund reduction of \$127,000. Staffing does not assume negotiated salary expenses. While salaries increase, the department does not normally receive an increased appropriation to cover the costs of inflation. The budget is balanced and it is assumed that there will be four fewer positions this year.

Current estimates indicate that school spending will grow 4.6% next year. The Education Fund is being affected by the slowing in growth of real estate values so it may not be possible to reduce the statewide tax rate this year as in years past. The other big budget item is special education funding where a 7% increase is anticipated.

Cate explained that while the budget reflects four less positions, the department is expected to have six fewer positions by 6/30/08 and there will be another target for 2009. He anticipates managing these reductions primarily through attrition.

Ruth Stokes questioned the status of science assessment funding. Cate explained that, although his preference would be for this item to be part of the base budget, it is once again being treated as a one-time appropriation in the administration’s budget. Chair James questioned the legislative responsibilities and how it relates to staffing. Bill Talbott explained that the budget is based on the staff that we have today and that we can assume that the level of benefits will not change substantially. Other increases, such as money for staff payroll may or may not be funded

in separate pay act legislation. Cate offered the department tells the Legislature what the true cost is and the legislature decides the appropriation. Cate stated that the budget proposal has been to the Board three times and asked that it be approved.

**Motion:** Stokes moved, Miller seconded, that the State Board of Education adopt the FY 2009 Department of Education budget proposal as submitted. The motion passed (7-1) (Corrow).

---

### **Action Items**

#### **Item H: Tuition Appeal (Mark Oettinger)**

**Motion:** At 10:27 a.m., Stokes moved, Schill seconded, that the Board go into executive session, and that Mark Oettinger, Richard Cate, Kevin Stine and Wendy Houlihan remain for the discussion. Motion approved unanimously.

At 11:43 a.m., Chair James called the meeting back to order.

**Motion:** Stokes moved, Miller seconded, that, if the appellant within 30 days provides adequate proof of the actual amount which was paid for tuition to an approved public or independent school, the SBE will order the district to reimburse that amount to the Appellant, and it will authorize the child's inclusion in the district's ADM count. The motion passed unanimously (8-0). Stokes offered that either party could speak with counsel for further clarification.

---

#### **Item I: Consent Agenda**

**Discussion:** Chair James commented that Item K, page 5 refers to Act 82, not to Act 182. Correction noted.

##### **1. Minutes of December 18, 2007 SBE Meeting**

**Motion:** Robbins moved, Schill seconded, to approve consent agenda, with comment. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

---

#### **Item F: Commissioner's Update (Richard Cate)**

**Document(s):** None

##### **Discussion:**

*Commissioner's Goals:* Work during the fall consisted of information-gathering; over the next several meetings, discussion will focus on specific topics: February - best practices; March - 21st Century Skills; April - technology integration. Cate noted that, beginning in fall 2008, Vermont will be working with the CCSSO's collaborative science program with NASA. Students will have multiple options of what approach to take and assessments are embedded to enable schools to incorporate this into their science programs. It is designed so that it may be offered in any high school, including small schools that do not currently have physics programs. In May, alternative learning environments, such as the CCSSO/NASA program described, as well as adult learning programs will be discussed. Chair James also requested that the Board visit the Community High School of Vermont.

*Legislative Update:* Cate requested that the Board let him know whether or not the weekly legislative updates are adequate. Seventeen reports are due to the Legislature this year. Governance was due 12/1/07 and a number are due today (January 15<sup>th</sup>). Stokes noted a number of newspaper articles and television spots regarding the number of reports to the Legislature and that the vast majority of these “gather dust.” She questioned whether reports will be read and whether the number of reports is necessary. She asked Cate if he had any idea whether or not the Legislature will try to get a handle on this. Cate replied that there are certainly people who recognize the issue, and that the reasoning behind the requests is the reliance on the agencies to provide the information being requested. Stokes reiterated her concern regarding the number of legislative reports required and whether or not the information being requested is useful and meaningful.

Cate reported that he met with the House Education Committee on the governance report on Wednesday and on Thursday members of the Statewide School Calendar Committee met with the committee. There will be discussions this week concerning a number of topics, including elimination of positions, statewide school calendar follow-up discussion, the efficiency of the department, and the budget. He also stated that Bill Talbott and the school finance team receive requests daily for finance and state aid information. Chair James commented that he finds it objectionable that the department is not funded to do the reports, and that it seems inappropriate that the Legislature requires the reports, but do not fund them.

---

### **Discussion Items (continued)**

**Item K: SBE Focus Topic: High Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** (Richard Cate, Bill Romond, Secondary Education Team Members)

**Document(s):** Discuss Topic and draft document

**Discussion:** Bill Romond asked the Board to recognize the secondary transformation team who introduced themselves:

Tina Muncy: school support coordinator – now 60 percent secondary transformation and 40 percent to other duties;

Kay Charron: LLL assistant director; career technical education and adult learning;

Carol Duley: coordinator of professional development – will work 50 percent on secondary transformation.

Richard Cate introduced David White, newly appointed director of the Lifelong Learning Team and spoke about how the work of the LL team is integrated with the work of the secondary transformation team.

Bill Romond shared that the document received is a draft and that the purpose of the discussion is to provide the Board with an opportunity to review the document, given its own current transformation initiative, and to seek input and support for the general concepts in this draft prior to field discussion re: transformation. Five strategic areas, aligned with the Board’s vision, are included: student competency for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum, instruction and assessment; student support system; support for teachers and school leaders; and policy and use of data to drive improvement. These areas provide a sense of how these concepts are aligned.

Cate noted that a lot of work has been done during the past few years and that this team will be continuing to engage in this work. Robbins asked about updating current documents. Romond reported that *High Schools on the Move* was very well received and that the work will build on all the positive things that are already underway. James commented that usually when something like this is brought before the Board, members provide their input, keeping in mind that there are connections that need to be respected. Stokes commented that there is a lot of agreement in the field and that she does not view this as stepping ahead and going beyond where they are. It picks up the elements of the Board's transformation document very well. She commented that the "results and indicators of success" section of the Board's transformation document may need to be expanded and clarified. She commended the team for doing an excellent job of pulling out the key elements. Romond recognized Kay Charron for her work on this document, noting that she has done a great deal of work to push the concept ahead over the last year and a half. Cate thanked the team.

**Discussion summary:** The Board asked to receive regular updates on the team's work.

---

**Item L: Winooski High School's Plan of Action** (Bill Romond, Steve Perkins, Cathy Mander-Adams, Jen Helm)

**Document(s):** None

**Discussion:** Cate shared that a month or so ago he read a newspaper article on the work Winooski High School was embarking on with respect to changing the way it educates its students. He introduced Steve Perkins, principal and superintendent-elect, who introduced Cathy Mander-Adams and Jen Helm. Perkins reported that a few years ago, the Winooski school system developed a strategic plan focusing on the following: 1) How did we get where we are? 2) What is too small? 3) What is cost-effective? 4) Are we lacking opportunities for our students? This plan not only addressed building needs, but technology needs. The design team started in 2005 and the plan goes until 2010. The district took the following steps: wired up the building (the old fashioned way – by voting for money), planned for sustainability and infrastructure; and, developed a *High Schools on the Move* plan (but found they were unable to dialog with other schools). One of their principles is flexible scheduling, but HSOM stops with block scheduling. HSOM is a very good program, but lost steam because current knowledge was not being used. Staff participated in a retreat and the administration supported them. Winooski has a very young and capable staff and are very good at doing things "out of the box." The design committee identified what was working, then identified goals and mapping out the direction to get to the goals. Seven staff members across the curriculum worked to create a plan that is new and improved for Winooski's students. Five categories were identified: 1) expect all students to learn through internships, online programming, individual plans, etc.; 2) Create an environment where all work together and graduate with a complete package; 3) Foster a warm and welcoming environment for all students; 4) Encourage staff to continue professional development; 5) Increase the utilization of technology to bring students into the 21st Century.

Commissioner Cate commented on Critical Friends, supportive environments, working together as a team. Brian Vachon asked for a quick portrait of Winooski High School. Steve Perkins shared that they use block scheduling, have 90-minute classes, meet quality standards, offer two languages, have a traditional math program, offer language arts core for freshman and sophomores and juniors and seniors choose. They have 234 students, 22 percent of whom are ESL (English as a second language). It is a very diverse school with multiple needs, most being a language and socioeconomic nature.

Obstacles: Perkins reported that the school struggles with a truly flexible schedule. It would be nice if they had a math lab that was available when students needed it. What if you could teach as in a one-room schoolhouse, and serve the needs of students without reducing opportunity?

Needed support: Mini-grants to support initiatives in learning, such as opportunities for action research; alternative programs such as: Rosetta Stone, where one runs two to three languages simultaneously by skilled teachers; Pierson Digital Learning, which has a successful credit recovery program which assesses what has been learned and what is left to be learned to become competent and whereby students could avoid taking an entire course over for only small missed components; Ellis Academic for Second Language Acquisition – most of these students have heavy work schedules to help support the family. The claim is that a teacher skilled in teaching foreign languages could offer this to all three levels of achievement. Perkins noted the need to organize a forum for new development that is taking place and inter-school sharing of information on using technology.

Chair James reiterated what Cate had said: the Board is very interested in what Winooski is doing. He offered that if there are areas that get in the way of what they are trying to accomplish, to come back to the Board to see what we can be waived or changed. The Winooski approach is interesting and has many parallels to the Board's transformation document. Copies of the "Results That Matter - Skills of the 21st Century Report" were available and offered to the group. Chair James again thanked the team for coming.

---

The Board broke for a 45-minute lunch break at 12:39 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chair James at 1:31 p.m.

---

### **Discussion Items (continued)**

**Item M: Proposed Bus Idling Rules (23 V.S.A. §1282(f))** (Cathy Hilgendorf, Bill Talbott)

**Document(s):** Discuss Topic Cover, Draft Rules and Comment

**Discussion:** Cathy Hilgendorf explained that during the last legislative session, a law passed that prohibits school busses from idling on school grounds and charged the Board with the rulemaking process. After going thru ICAR and public hearing period, changes were made to the proposed rule. The revisions were mostly format in nature and expanded upon the definitions of "idling" and "school grounds." Hilgendorf commented on the excellent feedback from those consulted – superintendents, principals, representatives from other state agencies, etc. Cate added that this piece of legislation was initiated by students and that their efforts were instrumental in getting this through the Legislature. The law will become effective for the 2008 school year. Stokes asked if there were people that feel their concerns were not addressed. Hilgendorf responded that there were some calls from drivers, needing clarification, but nothing significant. Dwight Davis voiced a concern regarding buses idling near building air intakes. It was clarified that the statute authorizing this rule only concerns idling on school grounds.

The legislation also instructed the department to develop and distribute a model policy to school districts that they may or may not use for staff, delivery vehicles, etc. That policy has been distributed to the field.

**Discussion Summary:** February 18<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda for final vote.

---

**Item N: Wrap Up and Future Agendas** (Richard Cate, Carol King)

**Document(s):** Building 07-08 – January 15, 2008

**Discussion:** King noted that Cate had reviewed the upcoming focus topics during his Goals update. The constituency groups invited to meet with the Board in February will include representatives from the business community, higher education and members of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators. Items for consideration at the February meeting include proposed post-secondary rules revisions. James noted that he had seen UVM president Dan Fogel and this jogged his memory about meeting with the higher education community.

April 8 Student Recognition: Jessica Bullock and Susan Schill will work on this; Brian Vachon also volunteered to assist.

---

**Old Business**

**Item G: Governance Report (Section 19 of Act 82 of 2007) Recommendation** (Tom James, Board members)

**Document:** Green Sheet and backup document

**Discussion:** The Board request a follow up discussion to the Governance Report submitted to Legislature. Cate noted that Macro International is already conducting a poll and he has arranged to have Macro International include six to eight governance questions on this poll. To avoid any question of bias, Cate has asked the Snelling Center to formulate the questions. This poll will be conducted in February 2008 and it is hoped that some information will be received by February or March 2008. The margin of error is +/- 5%. Stokes asked if the Board needs to get more information regarding this, if it is important enough to the public before they move forward. Corrow questioned if the first recommendation in the report will change the configuration of the LEAs, so that school choice could be available under the LEA, under NCLB. Chair James commented that it is very complete and thorough.

---

Carol King noted that DOE staff member Arlyn Bruccoli is doing demonstration of *The Art of Science* at the Legislature during the afternoon if Board members are interested.

---

**Adjourn**

**Motion:** Robbins moved, Miller seconded, to adjourn the January 15, 2008 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

---

**Item O: Written Items**

1. Focus Strategy Update
2. Strategic Plan Update

Minutes prepared by Maureen Start/Carol King